

(These policies were approved in outline at General Meeting for Scotland held on 12th November 2011)

GENERAL MEETING FOR SCOTLAND

Scottish Charity Number SC001281

Financial reserves; grants and donations; expenses claims

General Meeting policy on financial reserves

The following is a statement on the policy of General Meeting for Scotland (GM) in respect of holding financial reserves.

On ethical grounds, GM holds its reserves in accounts with the Co-operative Bank. Its policy is to hold reserves equivalent to at least six months of normal expenditure. These should (a) enable the meeting to meet all its obligations should its sources of income dry up for any reason (so, it should be able to pay off any outstanding bills, and meet its staff costs for a period of time); and (b) allow new obligations to be entered into without the need to seek additional funding from its constituent Area Meetings (AMs) (for example, to support a conference or an exhibition).

In recent years the GM treasurer has presented a budget outline for the next year to the November meeting. It should be noted that in practice the budget is brought roughly into balance by adjusting the GM's income from its constituent AMs, a system known as the "quota". This means that its income stream does not depend on unpredictable appeals for new funds.

General Meeting policy on awarding grants and donations

Grants (donations or annual subscriptions) are paid to organisations to which GM has appointed an active representative by virtue of its position as a faith organisation that represents all Scottish Quakers. This is to ensure that support given to GM by its member AMs is spent on upholding Scottish charities (with activities that are not just local) in which GM is genuinely active (in other words, organisations in which Quakers play an active role and to which Quakers do not just offer broad - but inactive - support). The list of recipients and the sums to be passed on are reviewed annually (at the November GM).

For information, the organisations supported in 2011 (as approved at the meeting held on 12th November 2011) fall into two main categories:

- (1) Quaker organisations or those in which Quakers play a major role
 - Northern Friends Youth Events Trust
 - Quaker Service (Northern Ireland)

- Quaker Council for European Affairs travel study bursary fund
- Edinburgh Peace & Justice Centre

(2) Ecumenical organisations that are supporting religious or political activity throughout Scotland.

- Alternatives to Violence Project (Scotland)
- Scottish Interfaith Council
- Scottish Churches Racial Justice Reference Group
- Faiths in Scotland Community Action Fund
- The Interfaith Group on Domestic Abuse
- Scottish Churches Housing Action
- Scottish Churches Parliamentary Office
- Jubilee Scotland
- Scotland's for Peace
- Scottish Churches China Group

Action of Churches Together in Scotland (ACTS): GM is a member of ACTS. Its membership fee is currently paid by Britain Yearly Meeting; however, GM pays expenses relating to its membership.

GM expects to receive reports from its representatives on these external bodies – either during formal business sessions or through reports in *Scottish Friend*. Such reports may provide occasions for discernment of the role that GM wishes to play in the work of these bodies.

Money given to AMs by Friends and Attenders represents donations made primarily to support Quaker work. This work may either be undertaken within the AM itself, or the AM may make external grants; these would be made by (and recorded in minutes of) the AM in session. It has become a convention in Scotland that support for charities operating throughout Scotland is primarily delivered through GM, rather than through individual AMs.

One-off donations

The criteria for GM to use when deciding whether to make a one-off donation are broadly similar. Thus

- the application of the funds should be for a Scotland-wide concern
- there should be a significant Quaker input to the work of the organisation.

One further consideration relates to GM's charitable status. One-off grants would normally only be made to other charities.

General Meeting policy on meeting expenses claims

GM meets the full expenses of Friends who are undertaking work on its behalf (in practice, mainly travel costs to meetings of the bodies on which GM is formally represented); Friends are encouraged to submit such claims so that the

full costs incurred through GM activities are out in the open. Car mileage is currently paid at a rate of 20 pence per mile.

Claims for expenses incurred in attending meetings of GM itself will be met by GM if (a) the Friend is presenting a report at the meeting or has been invited to address GM or to attend it for another reason, or (b) if the Friend is required to attend a committee meeting held in conjunction with GM (since GM would never want a member to be deterred from offering service on financial grounds). Travel claims submitted by the officers of GM such as its clerks are therefore met. Other travel claims would normally be expected to be met by members' own AMs.

John Phillips
(GM Treasurer)

November 2011